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Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

TEMP Max 26 | Min 15 | Humidity 75% Generally cloudy sky Sensex 83,576 | Nifty 25,683 | Gold 1,39,310 | Silver 2,49,000 | Dollar 90.16 | Euro 104.83 | GBP 121.02

CITY / PAGE 3

SMOKED UP

Police patrol teams monitoring grounds, footpaths and quieter parts of city find drug use has moved out of closed spaces and into public areas

CITY / PAGE 6

SLIGHT STING

Stricter mosquito-control rules, fines, improved treatment credited after K'taka reports zero dengue deaths for first time in five years

Survey reveals more than 2,000 avenue trees in some kind of trouble — 264 are dead, 1,427 have dead branches, 141 trees have hollow boles, 72 afflicted with disease or infection

WHAT AILS OUR AVENUE TREES?

Despite all talk and action, 128 trees have their bases concretised

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Enumeration and evaluation of avenue trees in the city by the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) shows there are more than 2,000 trees with various issues.

These include concrete around their bases, hollow boles, infection, and dead branches.

While 264 dead trees have been identified, there are 1,427 trees with dead branches, 141 trees with hollow boles, 72 trees with disease and some infection, and as many as 128 trees have their bases concretised.

In total, there are 2,042 such trees located by GBA's pilot project to identify dry and dangerous trees along main roads across all five city corporation limits.

The majority of these trees (574) are identified in Bengaluru West Corporation limit, followed by 456 in East City corporation limit, and 437 in South City corporation limit. North City Corporation has 175 such trees.

According to GBA, the team of 10 forestry students appointed nearly two months ago for the survey has so far evaluated only the trees along main roads in the city.

"We took up the survey on pilot basis, and it has worked well so far. However, it is a continuous process, and as the evaluators will cover arterial roads, the number of these

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

"Action on already identified dead, diseased trees will be taken up within 10 days. Regarding deconcretisation of avenue trees, we will start communication with engineers at the corporation level

—Ramachandran R, Special Commissioner, GBA

Dream home nightmares

3,033 housing projects of total 8,304 that applied for registration halted in state leaving buyers chasing a mirage

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Many homebuyers prefer to purchase flats as it not only fulfills their dream to have a shelter in the city, but also because flats are affordable, secure and have basic amenities. But, even for this, they have to invest their hard-earned money or borrow money to pay the builder for the promised flat. What happens to the hapless homebuyers if the housing project itself gets shelved?

According to the data available on the official website of Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA), 3,033 housing projects among the total 8,304 projects that applied for registration have been halted in the state due to one reason or the other. These abandoned housing projects are confined to major cities, including Bengaluru Urban and Rural, across Karnataka. The K-RERA rejected 901 applications for registration of housing projects based on valid

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Shopping spree

The Pink Gulab debuts its highly anticipated New Year Edit, with a two-day exhibition and sale which is open to all, promising a soulful journey through the finest handloom textiles and handcrafted accessories. **Where: Bangalore International Centre (BIC), Domlur; When: January 10 and 11, 11 am to 8 pm**

02 Art of storytelling

Atta Galatta is bringing a playful and powerful zine-making + storytelling workshop exploring the joy of independent publishing and self-expression through folded pages and storytelling. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 10, 5 pm**

03 Creativity unlocked

Atta Galatta is hosting a cozy and creative finger knitting workshop where participants will learn how to craft their own stylish bag, no needles required. All materials will be provided and participants will take home their finished bag along with any leftover yarn to continue creating. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 11, 2 pm**

04 Healthy living

PLAYDATE: Pickleball Edition by Wild Date is bringing a parent–child playdate designed to highlight the importance of clean, nutritious and mindful eating for kids, while encouraging a healthier overall lifestyle from a young age. **Where: The Hub, Commercial Street; When: Jan 11, 11 am**

05 Candlelit crescendo

The internationally acclaimed Candlelight® series by Live Your City is bringing an evening where audiences will experience iconic works reimagined through expressive live instrumentation and the soft glow of candlelight. **Where: Hyatt Centric Hebbal; When: January 11, 6.30 pm, 8.30 pm**

Another structure at Jnanabharathi campus?

With groundwork gathering pace at BU's Jnanabharathi campus hinting at yet another construction project, activists and environmentalists voice alarm over potential loss of trees

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Preparations underway at Jnanabharathi campus suggest yet another structure is set to rise, with the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) allegedly planning construction on seven acres recently allotted by Bengaluru University Syndicate. The land, granted against NLSIU's original demand for 16 acres, lies adjacent to Biopark Part 10, where several well-grown trees are expected to make way for the proposed building.

Environmentalists and activists have urged the Bangalore University Vice-Chancellor to either cancel the recent land lease allocation or ensure that no trees are lost. They point out that the University Syndicate, in its May 17, 2017 meeting, had cancelled a proposal to allot four acres to Karnataka State Women's University, and later, on December 9, 2022, recommended withdrawing 15 acres granted to the Inter University Centre for Yogic Sciences. The Syndicate also resolved to advise the Karnataka Biodiversity Board to declare the Jnanabharathi campus Biopark a heritage site under Section 37(1) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, as was done for the GKVK campus. In contrast, however, the Syndicate went ahead with the lease allocation of seven acres to NLSIU.

Activists believe Bangalore University authorities leased the land under external pressure or influenced by vested interests. Dr TJ Renuka Prasad, Professor of Geology and Coordinator of Biopark (retired), said that the University must answer for leasing land despite the Syndicate's decision, and for failing to protect the campus greenscape, streams, groundwater recharge systems, medicinal plants, herbs, birds, butterflies, and wildlife including jackals. "The NLSIU has already extended into the playground area, it's part of the forest region of survey number 6, Nagarabhavi village. Further extension in the recent past has meant the destruction of forest and forest-like areas. This is a violation of the Supreme Court orders," said Dr Prasad.

Land where proposed construction is set to take place

Environmentalist says sustainable planning needs environmental impact assessments, transparent approvals, and public engagement, urging comprehensive audit to explore how trees can be protected before any final decisions are taken

Urban strategist and environmentalist Vinod Jacob said that there has been virtually no public consultation on tree felling in Bengaluru for years, a lapse that is deeply concerning. He said that before taking any irreversible decisions, a comprehensive audit of the University campus is essential to explore how trees can be protected. "The campus has several ageing buildings that urgently need repair, restoration, or even reconstruction solutions that do not require sacrificing green cover. Unfortunately, trees have become the first victims of every project, and this approach must change," he said. He highlighted that sustainable planning demands proper environmental impact assessments, transparent approvals, and public engagement. "Bengaluru cannot afford to go the Delhi way, where deteriorating air quality has turned breathing into a health risk for citizens," said Jacob.

Blaming the authorities for failing to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) before allocating the land, Dr D Paramesh Naik, President of Environmental Society of India, said the Jnanabharathi campus serves as a vital recharge zone for rainwater harvesting and contributes to raising the groundwater table across nearly half of Bengaluru. "I am of the opinion that construction works are being taken up without considering the adverse impact of such structures. The Supreme Court has made it clear that conducting an EIA study is mandatory before getting permission from the authorities concerned," Dr Naik said.

Dattatreya T Devare, an environmentalist, noted that ample land is available at various locations in and around Bengaluru, yet expressed concern over institutions seeking to build structures within the Jnanabharathi campus. "Jnanabharathi campus is a biodiversity hotspot. The authorities concerned have to take measures to protect it. They should not allow the cutting of trees," Devare said.

IMTEX Forming 2026 to begin January 21

The Indian Machine Tool Manufacturers' Association will organise IMTEX Forming 2026 from January 21 to 25, 2026, at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre in Bengaluru. The event will focus on metal forming and manufacturing technologies and is expected to see participation from India and overseas.

The exhibition will feature over 600 exhibitors from 20 countries across four halls, covering an exhibition space of 46,000 square metres. Concurrent events include Tooltech, which will showcase machine tool accessories, metrology solutions, CAD and CAM tools and tooling systems. Digital Manufacturing will present solutions related to additive manufacturing and Industry 4.0. Weldexpo, organised in association with the Indian Institute of Welding, will focus on welding technologies. Moldex India and Fastenex India, organised by Messe Stuttgart, will also be held alongside the main exhibition.

Parallel programmes include the ninth International Seminar on Forming Technology on January 22 and 23. The i2 Academia Square will allow research institutions to present their work to industry participants, while the Jagruti IMTMA Youth Programme will focus on manufacturing awareness among young professionals. IMTMA President Mohini Kelkar said metal forming accounts for 29 per cent of the Indian machine tool market and continues to see steady growth. "IMTEX Forming provides a platform for manufacturers and users to engage with technologies that support production and exports," she said. **— BMB**

VK Kannada Habba fest lights up city from today

Drama, yakshagana, music, dance, quizzes and literary discussions promise a packed two-day celebration of Kannada culture in the city. Bengaluru's weekend buzz is set to get louder with the VK Kannada Habba, part of the Karunada Sambhrama beginning from Saturday. The festival brings together a rich mix of performing arts and intellectual engagement, offering something for every age group. While stage performances will entertain, quizzes and literary sessions aim to sharpen minds. Several competitions will also give participants a chance to win prizes.

Organised by Vijaya Karnataka, the state's largest-read Kannada daily, the event is more than just a celebration. It is envisioned as a cultural feast of navarasas, with the larger aim of strengthening the language and embedding it firmly in the minds of future generations.

Entry to the Kannada Habba is free, with the two-day festival offering a packed line-up of cultural and literary programmes from 10.30 am to 9 pm at Mangala Mantapa, NMKRV College campus in Jayanagar. The festival opens at 11 am on January 10 in the presence of dignitaries including Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji, Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara and several cultural figures, and Saturday's highlights begin at 1.15 pm with language expert G V Arun's talk on rare Kannada words, followed by folk singer Mallavalli Mahadevaswamy, quizmaster Dr Na Someshwar's interactive quiz, screenings of the eighth season of the 'Kshana Madhura' short film festival with actors and directors in attendance, a dance showcase by Prabhat Arts, and a musical evening featuring Sa Re Ga Ma Pa singers Shivani Das and Sachin. Alongside performances in literature, music, theatre, comedy, yakshagana and dance, the festival will also host a book fair and food stalls, positioning itself as an inclusive celebration of Kannada culture and Karnataka's progress, promising two days of continuous engagement for Bengalureans.

— Prakash VL

Parks under watch as open drug abuse rises

Police patrols book consumers as public leisure spaces witness rising open drug abuse cases weekly

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Officers intensify checks in public parks amid rising drug use

Enforcement squads have filed three separate FIRs after catching individuals inhaling cannabis during patrols across playgrounds, pathways and secluded corners, signalling a visible change in substance use patterns within the city

The fresh smell of grass in city parks and the sounds of walkers are slowly being replaced by the unpleasant sight of people openly smoking ganja. Over the past week, police patrol teams monitoring grounds, footpaths and quieter parts of the city have found that drug use has moved out of closed spaces and into public areas meant for everyone. This has led to the registration of consumer cases, with three FIRs booked against individuals caught consuming ganja in open spaces during the last seven days of the year.

"We keep receiving multiple complaints from the public regarding ganja consumption in parks and open grounds," the officer said. Police officials further explained that cases were booked after patrol teams detected people smoking ganja in public grounds, footpaths, parks and other isolated locations. According to the police, officers conducting routine patrols and surveillance identified individuals consuming ganja in areas frequently accessed by pedestrians, children and walkers, based on tip-offs, suspicious behaviour, and medical test reports, following which separate cases were registered.

In the first case, what began as a routine evening patrol led to a drug-related arrest at Wilson Garden on Sunday. Around 6.30 pm, a head constable and a constable were walking through the Hombe Gowda playground when they noticed a man behaving suspiciously. On spotting the police, he panicked and fled. He was caught and identified as Farooq Pasha (30), a resident of Jayanagar. Police officials noticed a strong smell of marijuana while speaking to him. When questioned, Farooq admitted that he had been smoking ganja mixed with cigarettes. He was taken to the police station and later sent for a medical test, which confirmed drug consumption. He was then brought back to the station for further action.

Similarly, a youth was taken into custody by the Vyalikaval police on January 5 for allegedly consuming ganja in a public place. According to the police, a head constable and another constable were on patrol in the area to curb vehicle theft and drug-related activities. At around 8 pm, the police received a tip-off that an unknown person was consuming ganja near the LPO ground. Acting on the information, the staff rushed to the spot and found a youth smoking ganja. On noticing the police, he attempted to flee but was chased and detained. The accused, a resident of Palace Guttahalli, was arrested and subjected to a medical examination at Santosh Hospital, which confirmed ganja consumption. Further legal action was initiated, and he was later released on bail.

A routine patrol on 4th Main Road in Jayamahal took a dramatic turn on Friday when an autorickshaw driver fled on spotting the police. Officers grew suspicious of the man, later identified as Waseem (40) of Shivajinagar, who appeared nervous during questioning. He allegedly jumped out of the vehicle, ran into a nearby park and discarded packets containing ganja. JC Park police recovered around two grams of the drug. Hours later, Waseem surrendered, claiming he panicked and was only a consumer.

Scammers pose as DCP, seek cash on WhatsApp

A day after a case of social media impersonation involving MLA CK Ramamurthy was registered, another incident came to light, with fraudsters attempting to misuse the photograph of Central Division DCP Hawke Akshay Machindra, leading to a case being registered at the Central Division CEN Police Station.

According to cyber police, the DCP himself lodged a complaint at the Central Division CEN Police Station after learning that fraudsters were circulating WhatsApp messages using his name and photograph. The messages, sent from multiple mobile numbers, targeted Machindra's acquaintances and police personnel.

Through the fake WhatsApp account, the scammers claimed that there was an issue with his bank account and that they urgently needed money. They asked recipients to transfer funds, promising to reimburse the amount within a day, citing the need to attend a meeting.

The messages were flagged by vigilant personnel who noticed inconsistencies and informed DCP Machindra on Friday afternoon, following which a complaint was filed.

Police officials confirmed that an investigation is under way to trace the perpetrators and prevent further attempts. The incident highlights a growing trend of scammers misusing official images and identities on social media and messaging platforms to dupe individuals.

–BMB

RDX bomb hoax sparks panic at Hebbal school

A bomb threat email sent to Kendriya Vidyalaya, Hebbal, on Wednesday afternoon caused panic among students, staff and nearby residents. The email claimed that three RDX explosives had been planted on the school premises. School authorities immediately alerted the police. Teams from the bomb detection and disposal squads, along with a dog squad, conducted a thorough search of the campus. No explosives were found and the threat was declared fake. Police have registered a case based on the principal's complaint and are tracing the email sender. The incident follows a similar hoax threat to the Koramangala passport office earlier this month. –BMB

GBA pilots climate action plans across five wards

Greater Bengaluru Authority completes ward-level climate action plans in five pilot wards focusing on heat stress, flooding, garbage management, water scarcity, air pollution, and community participation

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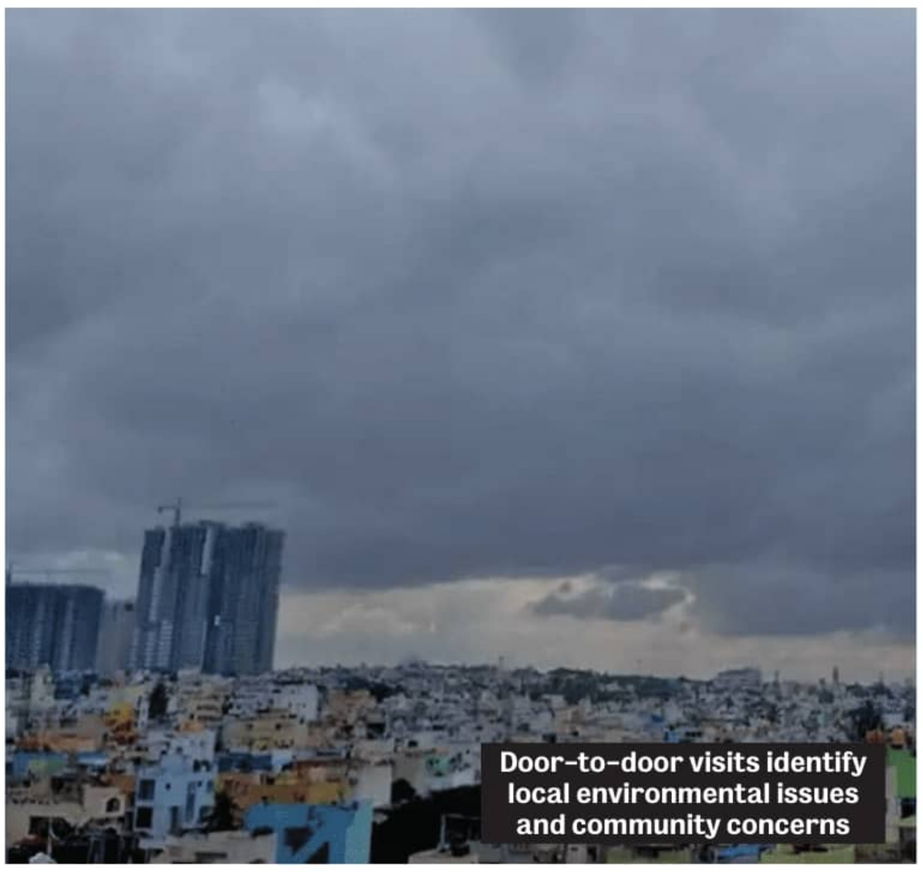
The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has completed its on-ground exercise to prepare a first-of-its-kind ward-level climate action plan for five model wards in the city, aimed at addressing climate change and related civic challenges. The selected wards include Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar Ward in Bengaluru West, Shantinagar in Bengaluru Central, Vijinapura in Bengaluru East, Jakkur in Bengaluru North, and Begur in Bengaluru South. These wards were chosen as part of a pilot initiative to understand climate-related issues at a micro level.

"Our teams conducted door-to-door visits to houses, schools, hospitals and government buildings in these wards to understand the issues plaguing these areas. We also held stakeholder meetings to gain deeper insights into possible resolutions. Currently, the solutions suggested by residents are under consideration," said Ramachandran R, Special Commissioner for Forest, Environment, Climate Change (FECC), elections, disaster management, public relations and coordination at the Greater Bengaluru Authority.



Door-to-door visits identify local environmental issues and community concerns

Based on these interactions, a detailed report is now being prepared by a team of experts with technical and sectoral expertise. The report will provide in-depth insights into the existing situation in each ward, key challenges identified, recommended actions, and prioritisation of these actions for effective implementation. The expert group will also drive the preparation of Ward Climate Action Plans (WCAPs), curate the report framework, and ensure quality delivery for all 10 shortlisted wards by January or February this year.

According to the GBA, the initiative aligns with the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, which grants constitutional status to urban local bodies and mandates local governance of urban areas. As part of this approach, one ward from each corporation zone was selected for the pilot project, with ward-specific issues discussed through a micro-level climate planning exercise.

According to the GBA, the initiative aligns with the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, which grants constitutional status to urban local bodies and mandates local governance of urban areas

"We are focusing on designing climate strategies at the ward level rather than at the city level. Any action plan to mitigate climate change and related challenges must be inclusive, and community participation is key to its success. We have received several thought-provoking ideas to address issues faced by the model wards. Our expert team is now drafting ward-level climate action plans based on these inputs," Ramachandran added. Issues taken into consideration during the exercise include heat stress, flooding, garbage segregation, air pollution and water scarcity, among others. Based on the outcomes and learnings from the pilot wards, the programme will be expanded to other wards across the city in the next phase.

Metro extension sparks debate over cost, efficiency

Proposed 60 km Bengaluru–Tumakuru metro faces doubts, experts caution city-style trains inefficient for long-distance commuters, suggest suburban rail instead

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has begun preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the proposed metro rail link between Bengaluru and Tumakuru, but mobility experts have expressed reservations.

The planned corridor will start from Madavara, the northern terminal of the Green Line, and extend approximately 60 km up to Tumakuru, passing through key growth areas such as Nelamangala and Dabaspet, which witness heavy commuter traffic and industrial activity.

Officials said the DPR will examine technical feasibility, passenger demand, alignment options, station locations, and cost estimates. It will also evaluate alternative transport solutions to determine the most efficient option for improving connectivity between the two cities. The project is expected to require an investment exceeding Rs 20,000 crore and could include more than two dozen stations. Once operational, the corridor aims to reduce travel time and ease congestion on the busy Bengaluru–Tumakuru highway.

Urban mobility experts and activists have raised concerns about the project's effectiveness. A transport specialist noted that metro systems are inherently designed for dense intra-city travel, not sprawling regional corridors. "Metro with stations every one to two kilometres will be inefficient for long-distance commutes and won't reduce travel times as needed," he said.

Corridor from Madavara to Tumakuru spans 60 km, passes busy Nelamangala, Dabaspet

"Metro with stations every one to two kilometres will be inefficient for long-distance commutes and won't reduce travel times as needed"
– Transport specialist

Commuter forums and community commentators argue that the plan overlooks more cost-effective improvements to existing rail and bus services. One transit user said, "Why build a slow, expensive metro when a fast suburban train or enhanced bus service on Tumakuru Road would serve commuters better?" Others warned that mega projects like this metro extension could divert attention and funding from upgrades to the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project, which connects surrounding towns but is delayed due to land acquisition challenges. Proponents of alternatives stress that mass transit planning must be context specific. "We need the right tool for the right distance — and for inter-city travel, suburban rail or RRTS is a better fit than city-style metro trains," a mobility advocate said. — BMB

Traffic studies flag double-decker limits

Studies indicate that the proposed 37 km double-decker corridor along Metro Phase-3 routes may not significantly ease traffic congestion on key stretches such as Kadabagere–Hosa Halli and JP Nagar–Hebbal. Analysis suggests that even with elevated corridors, ground-level traffic flow will remain largely unchanged, particularly for heavy vehicles like buses and lorries, which could struggle on narrowed single-lane sections between pillars. A survey of 1,000 commuters found that 78% face severe congestion between 6 and 9 am, while 48% experience it between 6 and 9 pm. Notably, 91% said they were unwilling to pay tolls. Traffic projections for 2031–2041 show only marginal relief, indicating double-decker corridors alone cannot resolve Bengaluru's chronic congestion across major city corridors.

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9591233247

Problems in your area?
Send us a picture along with specific details. And please, no phone calls or spamming

Traffic chaos

Sahankaranagar

Severe traffic congestion and confusing one-way system reported near Hyatt, Sahakaranagar, causing delays and commuter frustration.

Road danger

Rajajinagar

Uneven road stretch near Spectrum Diagnostics on Dr Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar, is causing difficulties for motorists and slowing traffic.

Maintenance lapse

Domlur

Poor maintenance has rendered the swimming pool and common areas in Domlur gated complex unsafe and unhygienic for residents.

CRIME FILES

Duo held for assaulting man after minor accident

A delivery rider working for Zepto was allegedly assaulted by two men riding a two-wheeler in Mahadevapura following a minor collision between their vehicles. After a video of the incident went viral on social media, police registered a case and arrested both accused.

The accused have been identified as Jagadeesh Pandit (28) and Dharma Pandit (20). On January 4, around 8pm, the delivery rider, identified as Deepak Kumar, picked up an order for delivery from the company's godown at 29th Cross, Kaggadasapura. According to the police, the incident occurred when the delivery executive was taking a right turn at the 29th Cross junction. At the same time, two riders travelling on a scooter from the opposite direction reportedly applied sudden brakes and fell on the road. After the fall, the duo allegedly picked up a quarrel with the delivery executive and physically assaulted him.

After the video went viral on Facebook on January 9, 2026, Baiyappanahalli police registered a case at Hoysala Police Station based on preliminary information. Police explained that the accused were arrested after being tracked using technical evidence and other information. Even the victim was tracked down based on the vehicle number. Police are continuing their investigation. **–BMB**

Seven accused of duping aspirants with fake jobs

A case has been registered against seven persons after a 50-year-old victim lodged a complaint alleging that he and five others were cheated of a total of Rs 60.5 lakh on the promise of securing government jobs in courts, with the accused allegedly using fake documents and impersonation.

According to the complaint, on December 9, 2022, Chandrashekhar visited the house of the prime accused, Sudarshan Addanthai.The accused allegedly showed documents claiming direct recruitment to government jobs, including copies of a court registrar's media release and a list of posts based on educational qualifications.

The next day, the accused collected documents related to Chandrashekhar's son and allegedly took Rs 5.5 lakh in installments. On December 26, 2022, a man posing as a judge reportedly met the complainant and gave him a file claiming it was an official court order, assuring appointment within 15 days. However, no appointment letter was issued.

The complaint further states that other victims paid substantial amounts, including Rs 8 lakh each by Sumit Kumar CM and Shivakumar G, Rs 11 lakh by Mahima MS, Rs 15 lakh by Harsha BR, and Rs 13 lakh by Harshita Srinivas. Gangamma Gudi police have been urged to take legal action against all accused. **–BMB**

Two held for misusing school funds

In a massive financial fraud case, the CCB police have arrested two persons for their alleged involvement in a Rs 4 crore misappropriation linked to the Kamala Muniyappa Educational Trust, which has been operating an educational institution since 2010.

An FIR has been registered against five accused, including the chief accountant of a private school, following a complaint. Among the five accused, CCB police have apprehended two. It is alleged that funds belonging to the school and its trust were misappropriated, with the complaint pointing to financial irregularities and diversion of money over several years. It is also said that fees paid by students was allegedly transferred for personal use. Efforts are underway to trace and arrest the other accused. **–BMB**

College student found dead

A 23-year-old dental student, identified as Yashaswini, was found hanging at her residence in Chandapura, Anekal, on Friday. Police officials said Yashaswini, a third-year student of oral medicine and radiology, was the only child of Parimala and Bhudevaiah. Her family has accused college authorities of harassment, alleging that the humiliation led her to take the extreme step.

According to Yashaswini's mother, her daughter had taken a leave on Wednesday due to eye pain. When she returned to college the next day, she was reportedly humiliated in front of classmates for not participating in a seminar.

Police confirmed that an investigation is underway to ascertain the circumstances surrounding Yashaswini's death. **–BMB**

Senior citizen duped of ₹1.01 crore in online scam

A 74-year-old citizen has lodged a police complaint alleging that he was cheated of over Rs 1.01 crore in an online stock trading scam operated through multiple WhatsApp groups and a fake trading application.

According to the complaint, the victim was added to a WhatsApp group titled Nirmal Wealth Architects 221 by an unknown number, where members promised high returns through stock market investments. He was later added to other groups, including NB Profit Maker 222 and NB Deposit Services HW1911, allegedly run by several administrators using different mobile numbers.

The complainant stated that he was directed to download a mobile application named NB Demat Trade through a link shared in the group. A woman identifying herself as Divya Kapadia, claiming to be an assistant, and another individual named Sunil Jain, posing as a team member, guided him through deposits and trading activities.

Between November 4 and December 9, 2025, the victim transferred a total of Rs 1,01,05,100 from his bank accounts to multiple bank accounts across various banks. Despite repeated assurances, the complainant neither received any returns nor was able to withdraw his invested amount. Police have registered a case in the East CEN Crime Police Station and initiated an investigation to trace the accused. **–BMB**

K'taka records zero dengue deaths as cases plunge statewide

Strict mosquito-control rules, fines, and improved treatment cut state's dengue burden, even as neighbouring states continue reporting higher case numbers

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For the first time in five years, Karnataka has reported zero dengue deaths. As of December 21, 2025, 3,428 cases were reported in Greater Bengaluru limits.

Overall, the state recorded 7,073 dengue cases this year, marking a sharp 82 per cent decline compared to 39,282 cases reported in 2024. Health officials attribute the steep fall largely to stricter enforcement of mosquito-control measures and improved clinical management across government and private hospitals.

A look at recent trends shows how sharply dengue cases had risen before the current decline. In 2020, Karnataka reported 3,829 cases with no deaths. The following year saw cases nearly double to 7,393, with one fatality. In 2022, the number climbed to 12,500 cases, resulting in nine deaths. The upward trend continued in 2023, when 19,300 cases were reported and 11 people died. Last year proved the worst, with 32,886 cases and 27 deaths recorded statewide.

Officials say the turnaround began after the state government declared dengue an infectious disease following last year's surge. This allowed authorities to invoke stricter provisions under the Epidemic Diseases Act and issue mandatory orders aimed at preventing mosquito breeding. Landowners, building owners, contractors and other responsible persons were made legally accountable for ensuring that breeding does not occur in water tanks, sumps, overhead tanks, vacant plots, construction sites, parks and playgrounds.

Despite ranking among India's more affected states, Karnataka reported zero dengue deaths due to improved monitoring and timely medical management

After years of rising infections and fatalities, Karnataka's aggressive enforcement, community compliance, and hospital preparedness delivered an 82 percent case drop and zero deaths, signalling stronger public-health management statewide results

Under the amended rules, water storage containers must be securely covered, and regular inspections have been intensified. Penalties were introduced to enforce compliance. Urban households face a fine of ₹400, while rural households are fined ₹200. Commercial establishments, offices, schools, colleges and healthcare facilities face fines ranging from ₹1,000 in rural areas to ₹5,000 in urban areas. Ongoing or stalled construction sites attract fines of ₹2,000, while vacant plots can be fined ₹1,000. If violations continue even after a notice is issued, an additional penalty of 50 per cent of the total fine is imposed every week.

Despite the decline, Karnataka remains the sixth most affected state in the country, according to the latest Health Ministry data presented in the Rajya Sabha. Within south India, the state ranks behind Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which reported 20,866 and 10,239 cases respectively. Telangana reported slightly more cases than Karnataka at 8,139, while Andhra Pradesh recorded 2,386 cases. Although Tamil Nadu accounted for nearly three times Karnataka's case load, Kerala reported the highest number of dengue deaths in the region at 49.

Nationally, dengue cases have reached 1,13,440 this year, with 94 deaths reported across India. Karnataka's share accounts for roughly six per cent of the national total. Public health experts say the state's zero-death record reflects timely diagnosis, better hospital preparedness and improved awareness among patients seeking early treatment.

Residents, however, remain cautious. "Every monsoon, the fear of dengue returns, especially for children and the elderly," said Ramesh, a Bengaluru resident. Authorities say awareness drives and surveillance will continue to prevent a resurgence in the coming months.

Dengue cases fall 19%

Dengue cases in India have shown sharp fluctuations over the past five years, data from the National Center for Vector Borne Diseases Control shows. In 2020, the country reported 44,585 cases, which surged over 333% to 1,93,245 in 2021. The upward trend continued in 2022 with 2,33,251 cases, a 20.6% rise, and climbed further to 2,89,235 in 2023, marking a 23.9% increase. In 2024, cases declined to 2,33,519, a 19.2% drop from 2023, underscoring dengue's strong seasonal and year-to-year variability nationwide.

State assembly hits historic sitting low

Karnataka recorded its lowest number of legislative sitting days in 2024, with the Assembly and Legislative Council meeting for just 26 days—fewer than even years disrupted by Covid-19 or President's Rule. The sharp decline has reignited debate on the need to mandate a minimum of 60 sitting days annually to ensure meaningful discussion and effective governance on the state's pressing issues.

Historical data underscores the contrast. The highest number of sittings was recorded in 1973, when the legislature met for 93 days during the Devaraj Urs era. This was followed by 88 days in 1963 and 74 days under Ramakrishna Hegde. At the lower end, only four sitting days were held in 1971, 17 days in 2008 during President's Rule, 19 days in 2020, and 20 days in 2019 due to the pandemic. Even after excluding election years and periods of central rule, 2024 stands out for its unusually low 26 days, while the current year has so far seen only 32 days of proceedings. **–BMB**

Private PU colleges oppose prep

Private pre-university college principals and lecturers have expressed strong displeasure over the Department of Pre-University Education sudden announcement of a second PU preparatory examination and its directive to upload all students' marks on the SATs portal, citing serious academic and technical concerns. While the department has justified holding two state-level preparatory exams to better prepare students for the annual examination, private colleges argue that the decision was taken without prior consultation.

The first preparatory exam began on January 2 and will conclude on January 17, followed immediately by the second from January 19. The revised schedule clashes with JEE Main- 1 and science practical exams, placing avoidable academic pressure on students and lectures during an already demanding assessment period. **–BMB**

Time to act on deconcretisation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

trees with various issues is expected to go up. We need to accelerate the survey pace to ensure dangerous trees and branches are removed by April, before the monsoon season," said Sudarshan GK, deputy conservator of forest (DCF), Greater Bengaluru Authority.

To ensure better management of avenue trees and avoid deadly accidents during the monsoon, the Greater GBA deployed the team of forestry students in November last year. The forestry graduates from Sirsi and Ponampet underwent a two-day training at the Institute of Wood Science and Technology to identify such trees and conduct the survey.

Diseased trees identified will be treated with the experts' intervention. Suggestion on treatment path will be obtained from members of the Tree Expert Committee. GBA may also consider suggestions from pathologists and forestry students, based on requirements.

Concrete from tree bases will be removed by engineers at the corporation level after the survey results are communicated to the respective department.

"We are planning to strengthen the team of evaluators to expedite the process. Moreover, we are starting on-ground intervention, simultaneously, while the survey is still going on. Action on already identified dead, diseased trees will be taken up within 10 days. Regarding deconcretisation of avenue trees, we will start communication with engineers at the corporation level," said Ramachandran R, Special Commissioner for Forest, Environment, Climate Change (FECC), elections, disaster management, public relations and coordination, Greater Bengaluru Authority.

City-based environmentalists say that while the survey is a welcome move, action on ground is important.

"While deconcretisation of trees falls under the road department's ambit, it is the least bothered about taking it up. Moreover, disease trees will have to be treated instead of taking them as an excuse to cut them," said Dattatreya Devare, trustee of Bangalore Environment Trust and a city-based environmentalist.

87% of RERA recovery orders not enforced

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

reasons. While 99 applications were withdrawn or revoked, 279 applications are under process and 189 applications are under query and 46 applications are for third party transfer.

The data indicates that around 40% of housing projects are delayed in Karnataka, thus leaving homebuyers, who have already paid down payment and have been paying equal monthly installments (EMIs) to financial institutions that sanctioned housing loans to them, become restless or running from pillar to post.

Penalty delays

The other startling data is the failure or delay in recovering the penalty or revenue imposed by the K-RERA on builders for violation of norms. As per the data, revenue authorities have succeeded in recovering the penalty from only 288 builders out of 2,279 builders. It is alleged that the authorities are yet to recover the penalty amounting to around Rs 800 crore from defaulting builders.

Stating that K-RERA was established to protect homebuyers from fraudulent promoters, Karnataka Home Buyers Forum Convenor Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar said that delayed housing projects indicates the incompetence of the K-RERA and dereliction of Karnataka Government to protect the interest of homebuyers.

Sudhakar Lakshmanaraja, founder of Digital South Trust, sent an e-mail to Karnataka Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh to intervene immediately to protect homebuyers in Karnataka as out of the 8,304 registered projects, 3,033 have lapsed or remain indefinitely stalled, a clear alarm for the housing sector in the state.

With more than 87% of RERA recovery orders remaining unenforced, he said the failure of the enforcement mechanism too is evident. "Housing is a basic human right, and stalled projects combined with weak accountability amount to a denial of that right. NHRC and SHRC complaints pending for months without action further indicate serious dereliction of duty by officers concerned. This crisis is rooted in lack of transparency. A blockchain based RERA system can bring real-time, tamper-proof visibility into project status, escrow fund usage, recovery actions, and officer responsibility. Such transparency will prevent delays, enforce accountability, and restore public trust. Citizens do not need new laws. They need transparent, technology driven governance that enforces existing orders, completes stalled projects, and protects honest taxpayers and homebuyers," he said.

He lodged a complaint with Karnataka State Human Rights Commission on December 3, against the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Urban District for failing to recover the penalty imposed on a builder by K-RERA for the delay in handing over the promised flat but there has been no progress in the investigation.

Eco-friendly homes offer long-term value

Green real estate investments offer stable returns, lower environmental impact, improved living quality, long-term value, and future-ready sustainable growth

Real estate refers to land, buildings and the natural resources attached to them, and compared to many other investment avenues. It is seen as relatively stable, though liquidity remains limited. In recent years, green real estate has emerged as a smarter choice, offering not just financial returns but also a step towards a more sustainable future. Investing in eco-friendly projects is increasingly being viewed as a long-term value proposition rather than just a trend.

Investing in eco-friendly projects is increasingly being viewed as a long-term value proposition rather than just a trend

Eco advantage

Sandhya Kumar, a developer, said, "Green real estate projects are designed to reduce environmental impact through energy-efficient planning, use of renewable resources and sustainable construction practices. Such homes typically offer better waste management systems, ample open spaces and green zones, good daylight and ventilation in every room, rainwater harvesting and water recycling units, environment-friendly construction materials and solar-powered lighting in common areas. These features not only reduce carbon footprints but also improve the quality of life for residents."

> **"Buyers are advised to choose projects that already have the required approvals and to familiarise themselves with local zoning laws, rental regulations and tax implications**
> –Umesh Kamath, urban expert

Legal checks

"Most green buildings seek certifications such as IGBC or LEED, which involve detailed audits before approval. These certifications ensure the quality and proper implementation of green measures. Buyers are advised to choose projects that already have the required approvals and to familiarise themselves with local zoning laws, rental regulations and tax implications. Understanding recent changes in property tax laws can help in accurate budgeting and avoid unexpected costs. Thorough due diligence remains key to success in real estate investment," said Umesh Kamath, an urban expert.

–Prakash VL

Luxury farmland redefines modern living

Premium farmland is fast emerging as the new investment favourite among Bengalureans, redefining modern living with a blend of luxury and wellness. Away from the bustle of city life, these fertile parcels are drawing buyers looking for a healthier lifestyle and long-term returns. Many areas around Bengaluru are seeing strong interest from resident's keen to escape congestion and spend quality time amid greenery, without moving too far from the city.

Growing demand

Well planned farmland with clubhouse facilities and modern amenities is attracting buyers who see value beyond just land.

Nitin Prabhua, a developer, said, "Many are investing in productive plots to grow timber, fruits, vegetables and commercial crops, combining steady income with peace of mind. Premium farmland is also seen as a safe bet, with prices expected to double in a few years, making it both a lifestyle upgrade and a wealth creator."

With industrial activity, employment opportunities and social infrastructure in place, experts say farmland and plotted developments around Bengaluru's outskirts are now firmly on the radar of serious investors.

–BMB

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Real estate shifts from spikes to stability

As the new year begins, the real estate market continues to show stability, with a clear shift towards long-term value creation rather than short-term price spikes. Experts say the previous year ended without sharp or unexpected increases in property prices, signalling a mature and balanced market environment.

"In 2026, the focus will remain firmly on sustained value creation, particularly in luxury and branded housing segments that continue attracting steady interest," said Vanitha Reddy, a realtor.

During the last quarter, the sector recorded all-India growth of 3.1 per cent, reflecting steady momentum supported by stable demand, favourable policies and accessible financing options. While early-stage and affordable housing segments continued facing pressure, luxury housing witnessed strong demand across major metropolitan cities, with homes priced above 1.5 crore developed to match market appetite.

High-budget buyers are increasingly prioritising location, thoughtful design, brand value, green features and lifestyle amenities. Industry experts note discerning buyers are driving greater transparency, timely project delivery and improved living experiences. Although gradual price appreciation is expected next year due to improving incomes, the current phase reflects cautious confident evolution.

–BMB

Domestic capital fuels realty growth

Institutional investments in Indian real estate reached an all-time high of USD 8.5 billion in 2025, registering a 29 per cent year-on-year increase driven largely by domestic investors. According to a Colliers India report, domestic capital more than doubled to USD 4.8 billion, accounting for 57 per cent of total inflows, reflecting stronger confidence in asset quality, stable returns and market transparency. Foreign investments declined 16 per cent to USD 3.7 billion, though cross-border deals showed recovery signs during the final quarter. Office assets dominated activity, attracting 54 per cent of total investments, followed by residential and industrial or warehousing segments. The fourth quarter alone recorded a record USD 4.2 billion inflow, the highest ever for a single quarter, signalling positive momentum for 2026. Experts expect investments to rise further.

–BMB

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

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STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

NATURE'S SILKEN SURPRISE

Our reader shares Web-covered trees resembling massive cotton candies on a foggy morning in Munnar. The webbing, spun by caterpillars, forms a protective communal nest that shields them from predators. Nature never ceases to amaze.

The picture was clicked by reader **NJ Ravi Chander**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

KIA arrival relief: Valet parking to ease P4 pickup delays queues

Chief Secretary orders valet retrieval from P4 to curb chaos, regulate taxis and ease passenger complaints at Bengaluru airport arrivals

In a relief to passengers arriving at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh has directed airport officials to introduce a valet parking service for private car owners whose vehicles are parked at P4. Under the proposed arrangement, cars parked in P4 can be brought to the arrival lanes within four minutes, easing congestion at Terminal 1.

The direction was issued during an on-site review when the Chief Secretary assessed passenger grievances linked to the airport's recently implemented parking and vehicle registration system. Her visit followed a rise in complaints from travellers over delays, confusion and crowding at arrival gates.

Officials informed her that passenger feedback received by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) showed a 100 per cent surge in complaints since the new system came into force. Most concerns centred on long vehicle queues, unregulated pick-ups and a lack of clarity for passengers and drivers. BIAL officials explained that the four pick-up points in front of the Terminal 1 arrival terminal, each with three lanes, together form 12 lanes designed to handle around 30 cars every 90 seconds. In practice, nearly 100 vehicles were entering the area at once, creating bottlenecks that took up to 10 minutes to clear.

Airport authorities noted that at most airports, private white-board vehicles are allowed limited free access for pick-ups, while commercial yellow-board vehicles are regulated and allotted dedicated zones. Commercial operators are required to pay an aggregator fee per ride, and parking is not permitted within 100 metres of the arrival gate.

After complaint spike, BIAL revamps arrivals with valet parking, taxi zoning, shuttles, staff support and stricter vehicle regulation to cut queues, waiting times and confusion at Terminal 1 for passengers

To streamline arrivals, officials said BIAL has created a 1,000-car parking facility for registered app-based taxi services. Inter-terminal shuttle buses are operating every five minutes, and six specially equipped vehicles with hydraulic wheelchair facilities are available for senior citizens.

A transport desk has been set up at the terminal to guide passengers on the revised parking and pick-up system. As part of the transition, 20 BIAL staff members have been deployed along the walkway to assist passengers. Clear signage has been installed to guide travellers to parking areas and shuttle points. Free shuttle services have been added to make transfers more convenient.

App-based taxi services such as Namma Yatri and Rapido have been shifted to P4 instead of P1 and P2. Vehicles meeting mandatory safety and compliance requirements, including police verification, fitness certificates, AIS-140 tracking devices, functional panic buttons and verified documents through the VAHAN platform, will be registered via KSTDC and permitted regulated access. Officials said 900 licences have already been issued, with more to be provided soon. **— BMB**

Officials review live traffic data as complaints spike, highlighting bottlenecks caused by unregulated vehicle entry and overcrowded arrival lanes at peak hours

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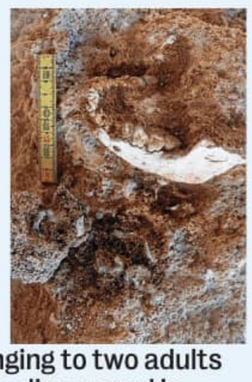

Fossilised bones and teeth dating back about 773,000 years, unearthed from a cave in Casablanca, Morocco, are offering new insights into the deep African roots of human evolution. The remains—belonging to two adults and a toddler—were discovered in Grotte a Hominides and include lower jawbones, teeth, a thigh bone, and vertebrae. Researchers believe these fossils represent an evolved form of the archaic human species Homo erectus, showing a mix of primitive and more modern human features. The cave appears to have functioned mainly as a carnivore den. Bite marks on the adult thigh bone suggest the individual may have been scavenged or hunted by a hyena, highlighting the dangers early humans faced despite being capable hunters themselves. The fossils help fill a critical gap in the African hominin record between one million and 600,000 years ago. Scientists say this population may have lived shortly before the evolutionary split that led to Homo sapiens in Africa and Neander-thals and Denisovans in Eurasia. Precisely dating the fossils using magnetic signals from surrounding sediments was crucial in placing them within the human family tree. **— Reuters**

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Minneapolis shooting prompts spread of misrepresented and fabricated images online

THE CLAIM: Images circulating online show the ICE officer who fatally shot Renee Good standing unmasked at the crime scene, clearly revealing his face to bystanders and cameras.
FACT: The images are fabricated and likely AI-generated. Authentic video footage never shows the officer unmasked, and experts say facial reconstruction from such material is unreliable.

Misrepresented and fabricated images circulated widely on social media following the fatal shooting of a Minneapolis woman, Renee Good, by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer on Wednesday, prompting widespread confusion and misinformation.

In the hours after the incident, several photos were falsely shared online claiming to show Good, a 37-year-old mother of three. Other images were circulated purporting to reveal the identity of the ICE officer involved, while some posts went further, alleging the officer had a Nazi tattoo. An unrelated, older video of Ron DeSantis was also misrepresented as commentary on the shooting.

One prominent claim involved images said to show the ICE officer without a mask at the scene. These images are false. While they resemble screenshots from genuine footage of the shooting location, the actual video never shows the officer's face uncovered. According to Hany Farid, a digital forensics and misinformation expert at the University of California, Berkeley, the images appear to be AI-generated. Farid explained that even under better conditions, AI-based facial reconstruction is unreliable, and when half the face is obscured—as in this case—it is not possible to accurately recreate a person's identity.

Good herself was also repeatedly misidentified. Two widely shared photos of a blonde woman with a young child were incorrectly labelled as images of Good. In reality, the photos are of Renee Paquette, a former WWE wrestler, and her daughter, taken from Paquette's Instagram posts in 2023 and 2024. Paquette publicly corrected the misinformation, expressing condolences to Good's family. Another photo claimed to show Good instead depicted Gabriela Szczepankiewicz, whose image appeared alongside Good's in a 2020 Old Dominion University Facebook post announcing winners of a poetry prize.

Claims that the ICE officer bore a Nazi tattoo were also unfounded. The image in question came from an Instagram video posted days before the shooting and showed a different man with a lightning-bolt tattoo on his neck. Footage from the actual incident shows the officer does not have a tattoo in that location, and even his ear shape differs from the man in the unrelated video. Finally, a video circulating online allegedly showed DeSantis discussing or defending Good. This, too, is false. The clip originates from a June interview on "The Rubin Report," where DeSantis was speaking broadly about Florida's protest laws, not the Minneapolis shooting.

Together, these false claims illustrate how quickly misinformation can spread during breaking news events, underscoring the need for careful verification before sharing content online. Experts urge readers to rely on verified sources, avoid resharing unconfirmed visuals, and allow investigations to proceed before drawing conclusions. **— AP**

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CREDAI BENGALURU

NGT probe clears KIADB of lake buffer violations

Deputy Commissioner's inspection contradicts allegations against industrial authority

Officials reported intact wetlands after a district-level survey, stating planning safeguards were observed during layout design

Following an application before the National Green Tribunal alleging encroachment of lake buffer zones in the Doddaballapur area by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB), a ground inspection was conducted by the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Rural District.

In a report submitted to the tribunal, the DC clarified that the water bodies exist in their natural form. Moreover, no development activities such as earth filling, levelling, construction, road formation, or infrastructure works were carried out within or around the buffer zones of the water bodies.

"Contrary to the allegations, no encroachments, alterations, or obstructions were observed within the water body or its buffer zone. The Kunte has been retained in its original condition, and no interference with its natural form has taken place," the report filed by the DC noted.

Notably, the application, filed a few months ago, alleged that a link road was being laid from Doddaballapur to the Dobbaspet Main Road, leading to the proposed KIADB Industrial Area at Gorgatha village, and that the said road was encroaching upon the buffer zone of Hulikunte village.

The application sought directions to ensure that no construction work was permitted within the buffer zones of the Kunte, locally known as Kongayyana Katte.

In response to directions issued by the National Green Tribunal, a site inspection was conducted by the Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru Rural District, along with the Special Land Acquisition Officer, KIADB, and the Assistant Executive Engineer, KIADB.

The inspected area falls within the proposed KIADB layout. The land surveyed included natural water bodies locally known as Kongayyanakatte Kunte and Chikkarayyana's Katte, which serve as traditional surface water storage structures.

In its report, KIADB stated that the presence of Kongayyanakatte Kunte and Chikkarayyana's Katte was taken into consideration during the planning stage. An adequate buffer of 30 metres from the periphery of the lakes has been provided, and no encroachments or alterations have been made within the water bodies or their buffer zones. The Executive Engineer of KIADB has also furnished a sketch depicting the buffer zones maintained around the water bodies.

Notably, the 30-metre buffer zone norm has been prescribed to ensure the protection of lakes, as buffer zones act as protective barriers to prevent encroachment into water bodies, obstruction of natural drainage patterns, and adverse impacts on the ecological and hydrological functions of lakes. **–BMB**

SOCIALTATTLE

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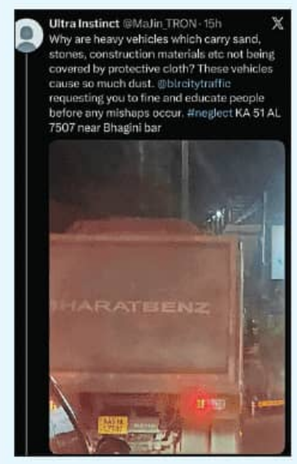
A Bengaluru commuter tested the Nagara Meter Auto app by booking a short ride and paying the minimum fare, only to have a professional driver accept instantly.

A stretch of footpath in Indiranagar has gone viral not for potholes, but for being unexpectedly green. The unusual sight amused social media users.

WHAT'S TWEETING?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BHARATBENZ

Dust clouds from uncovered sand and stone-laden trucks continue to plague city roads. A social media user flagged a vehicle near Indiranagar, urging traffic police to fine violators and enforce safety norms before such neglect leads to accidents or serious health concerns.

INHIGH COURT

Sri Sri Ravishankar land grab case: Court won't interfere

The Karnataka High Court has refused to intervene in an ongoing investigation into alleged land encroachment in Bengaluru, in which spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has been named as an accused. A single-judge Bench headed by Justice M Nagaprasanna declined to stay the probe or quash the first information report, observing that halting the investigation at this stage would run contrary to earlier court directions aimed at addressing encroachments on public land.

The court noted that it would not be appropriate to grant interim relief without first examining the complete records of the case. However, it left open the option for the petitioner to approach the court again if any formal notice is issued to him by the investigating agency. The matter has been posted for further hearing on January 12.

The FIR was registered by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Task Force police under provisions of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, following allegations of illegal occupation of government land in Kaggalipura village. The case stems from proceedings in a public interest matter in which authorities had flagged encroachments, including on a stormwater drain connecting nearby lakes. An FIR was filed over alleged government land encroachment in Kaggalipura. Denying ownership, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar sought relief, but the High Court allowed the probe to continue and sought records. **–BMB**

State ordered to revamp e-procurement

The Karnataka High Court has directed the State government to revamp its existing electronic procurement framework after flagging repeated instances of bidders submitting forged documents during tender processes.

The court observed that the current system lacks adequate technological safeguards to detect fraudulent submissions at the initial stage, allowing such documents to pass scrutiny until disputes arise. Stressing the need for preventive mechanisms rather than post-facto penalties, the High Court said public procurement systems must be designed to block manipulation before contracts are awarded.

A division Bench noted that all government tenders should be processed exclusively through a strengthened e-procurement platform equipped with automated verification tools. These tools, the court said, must be capable of identifying discrepancies, incomplete data and suspicious uploads at the time of submission itself.

The judges stressed the need for institutional memory, calling for a centralised database of barred contractors to track repeat offenders and stop them bidding again.

Dismissing a contractor's plea against disqualification for submitting forged documents, the High Court upheld the debarment and flagged flaws in the tendering process. It directed the government to modernise the e-procurement system and submit a status report, stressing the need for transparency and accountability. **–BMB**

INBRIEF

CBI nabs top scientist in ₹9.5L bribe sting

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) apprehended the Joint Director of the Central Power Research Institute (CPRI), Bengaluru, along with an executive of a private company, while allegedly accepting a bribe of ₹9.5 lakh on Friday.

The case, registered on January 8, 2026, alleges that the accused were involved in corrupt practices by demanding and accepting bribes to issue favourable test reports for electrical equipment produced by M/s Sudhir Group of Companies. Following the registration of the FIR, the CBI laid a trap, leading to the arrest of both the public servant and the private company executive on January 9, 2026.

During searches at the residence of the Joint Director, authorities recovered cash totalling ₹3.59 crore, along with foreign currency, including US dollars, euros, Hong Kong dollars, Singapore dollars, Malaysian ringgit, Indonesian rupiah, UAE dirhams, yuan (renminbi) and Swedish krona, worth approximately ₹4.05 lakh. In addition, jewellery and incriminating documents were seized. The total recovery so far amounts to around ₹3.76 crore, and searches are ongoing. The CBI stated that the investigation into the case is still in progress and that further action against the accused is under way. **–BMB**

BMTC bus, 2-wheeler crash kills man

A 28-year-old man was killed in a BMTC bus and a two-wheeler collision in Electronic City on Friday..

The deceased has been identified as Kaniraj, who hailed from Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu. According to the traffic police, the accident occurred around 12.30 pm when Kaniraj and two of his friends had come to the city from Hosur on a two-wheeler to look into a juice shop he wanted to start. While on the way, their bike collided with a BMTC bus. The handle of the two-wheeler hit the bus, causing Kaniraj to lose balance and fall under the rear tyre of the bus. Kaniraj's friend, who was riding pillion, sustained injuries. Police said the accident was caused due to the BMTC bus driver's carelessness. The driver has been arrested and the bus seized. **–BMB**

Show some appreciation

Ricky Kej notes Priyanka has not got love she deserves from home country

Desi girl turned global icon Priyanka Chopra is known to enjoy both an Indian and an international fanbase. However, three-time Grammy-winning musician Ricky Kej feels that Priyanka has not been "celebrated enough" in India, despite her talent and achievements. Kej took to X (formerly Twitter) and shared his strong opinion on the matter.

Rickey Kej shared a note where he appreciated the actress for her skills and versatility. At the same time, he mentioned that the kind of celebration that 'The Bluff' star deserves, she hasn't received from her home country. He wrote, "My Opinion: The one actor in India who we do not celebrate enough is @priyankachopra. She is the ONLY Indian actor (of any generation) who has truly made waves in Hollywood and globally (After being one of the most sought after in India for many years)."

Kej further highlighted how PeeCee has starred with many of the Hollywood "giants" like Edris Alba, Dwayne Johnson, Keanu Reeves, Karl Urban, Richard Madden, Stanley Tucci, Will Ferrell, Anthony Mackie, John Cena, Pedro Pascal; "And the list goes on," he adds.

As for roles in International movies and series, Ricky Kej believes that Priyanka Chopra plays "actual mainstream roles", and "not some vague character who is 'exotic Indian'".

The Grammy-winning musician further stressed that Priyanka is widely recognized as a great actor who can perform any kind of role. She is an ambassador with UNICEF and gives back to society. **—ETimes**

Sophie can't watch 'Game of Thrones' anymore

Hollywood actress Sophie Turner has shared that she can't watch her superhit series 'Game of Thrones' anymore. The actress said that the 'Game of Thrones' theme song has given her "PTSD".

The 29-year-old actress portrayed Sansa Stark in all eight seasons of the HBO fantasy show, which ran between 2011 and 2019, but Sophie has now revealed she "can't watch" 'Game of Thrones' and now sees the programme in a "totally different" way, reports 'Female First UK'.

During an appearance on 'The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon', the host asked Sophie, "Do you feel the giant impact it's made on television and the world?" She replied: "I think so? I don't know".

Jimmy then asked the actress, "Do you ever watch it?". The actress said, "No! I mean, maybe like, season one, I watched it with my parents, and then my parents were like, 'Whoa! No! No, no, no, no!' But no, I can't watch it. I mean, hearing the 'Game of Thrones' theme tune gives me PTSD. I see it totally different".

As well as Game of Thrones, Sophie, who split from her ex-husband Joe Jonas, 36, in 2023, commented on Amazon's upcoming show, in which she will portray Lara Croft. She teased, "You're going to see it on Amazon Prime in a while..." **—IANS**

Done & dusted? Not quite

For a long time, Oscar-winner Kate Winslet thought she was done with her beloved HBO show "Mare of Easttown" but then she had conversations around reviving the series for a new season that could film sometime in 2027.

The seven-episode 2021 drama, created by Brad Ingelsby, revolved around Winslet's Mare Sheehan, a small town sergeant detective.

There have been on-and-off conversations around reviving the series that was directed by Craig Zobel, but it is the first time that Winslet, who has been busy with her Helen Mirren-starrer movie directorial debut "Goodbye June", has shared an update about the 2021 series.

Winslet told the Deadline that initially "Mare of Easttown" was designed as a one-off single-season drama.

"It was done and dusted, finished," Winslet said, adding that when she was in London editing "Goodbye June", "there were some conversations". "They were proper conversations around a timeframe when it could be possible," she said. **—PTI**

Recipe for big-budget let-down: Incongruous script, poor screenplay

The much-awaited Prabhas-starrer multi-lingual The Raja Saab is one of the big-budget movies of Prabhas. It is his first horror genre movie so it created a lot of buzz among moviegoers. The audiences, especially hard-core fans of Prabhas, had a lot of expectations from it, but sadly, this film just disappoints. Director Maruthi failed miserably to keep the screenplay crisp. The director also forgot to give importance to the script. It looks like the script was written for Prabhas without any justification.

The other problem with this movie is its runtime - 189 minutes. Had the editor reduced its duration by 30 to 40 minutes, the movie would have been a good entertainer. Some of the scenes are incongruous. Song sequences are rich but audiences will forget those songs as soon as they come out of the theater. The director has ended up offering neither a horror nor a comedy flick.

The movie begins with a mortuary van driver carrying ashes of a destitute. He ends up in an abandoned house in the forest in Narasapur where he faces a lot of problems. The scene shifts to a village where Raju (Prabhas) is taking care of his grandmother Gangamma (Zarina Wahab) who has Alzheimer's disease. She tells Raju that she had a dream and came to know that her husband Kanakaraju (Sanjay Dutt) is in Hyderabad. Raju realises he has to bribe the police to search for his grandfather. He takes Rs 5 lakh from Anita (Riddhi Kumar) and leaves for Hyderabad to bring his grandfather. He happens to meet Blessy (Nidhi Agerwal), a postulant, and falls in love with her.

Prabhas has tried his best to meet his fans' expectations. Among the three actresses, Malavika Mohanan walks away with all honours for her sterling performance. Zarina Wahab has provided good support. Sanjay Dutt is convincing as a vicious person, who can stoop to any level for money. Samuthirakani has no scope to showcase his acting skills. **—Y Maheswara Reddy**

THE RAJA SAAB
2.5 RATING ★★½☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** Maruthi
- **ACTORS** Prabhas, Nidhi Agerwal, Malavika Mohanan, Riddhi Kumar, Sanjay Dutt, Boman Irani
- **Duration** 189 minutes
- **Certification** U/A

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Thakar Tejalben Pranav, R/o Chikkathoguru, Bengaluru, shall be known as Thakar Tejal Pranav for all purpose.

I, Sreenivasa Ramakrishnappa, R/o Palanahalli, Yelahanka, Near Alfa School, B'luru-560064, have changed my name to Srinivasa Ramakrishnappa

I, Mohammad Qamruzzama S/O Abdul Gafur R/o Near Government Hospital Varadapura Malur Road Hosakote Bengaluru Rural 562114 have changed my name to Mohammed Qamruzzama Sufi .

I, Kavitha Grandum, W/o Damarla Srikanth, R/o 726, 21st Main, JP Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore - 560078, have changed my name to Grandhim Kavitha for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 07-Jan-2026 sworn before Notary Mohammed Hussain K.

I Mohammed Farhan S/O, Ameen Mohamed Moeen R/o No 102 2nd Main Road Parvathi Pura, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru, 560004 have changed my name to Farhan Pasha.

I, NASEER AHMED residing at #No.680, 2nd Block, Near Ayyappa Temple, Siddartha Nagar, Bangalore-560015. I have changed my name to NASIR AHMED. Vide affidavit dated 09/01/2026 sworn before notary.Leela Bengaluru

I, RANGANADHAN POONGODI, W/o Muthappa B, resident of No.239, Yaradanda halli, Ganesh Temple, Banga lore Urban, Karnataka-560105, have changed my name to POONGODI R, vide affidavit dt: 06.01.2026 sworn before notary V.Rangaraju, Bangalore.

I, Savitha Ajit Thadimary, Aged about 57 years, residing at Sri Venkatadri, 699/A, Banashankari 6th Stage, 2nd Block, Bengaluru 560061. I have changed my name to Savitha Ajith Thadimary vide affidavit dated:06/01/2026 before notary N Sandhya.

I, Kowsalya Devi Shivalingaiah, w/o Nataraj Adishakthihalli Chikkaputtaiah, R/o No, 1097, 16th cross road, 25th Main, Banashankari 2nd stage, B'luru-560070, have changed my name to Kousalya Devi Shivalingaiah for all Purposes.

I, Yogish Somashekar Chikkajjikattehalli s/o C G Somashekar R/o S-410, 7th Cross, Bharathnagar, Byadarahalli, B'luru 560091 have changed my name to Yogish Chikkajjikattehalli Somashekar. I shall be called by this for all purposes

I, Sulekha Kishor Kumar Hegde W/o, Kailkere Kishore Kumar Hegde R/o Srinivasa,1st Stage,1st Main, kalyana Nagara, chikkamagaluru 577102 have change my name to Sulekha Kishore Kumar Hegde.

I, Suma Bangalore Nagaraj, w/o Prabhakar, R/o No 110, 5th Cross, Behind Govt School B.Narayanapura, Doorvaninagar B'luru-560016 have changed my name to Suma for all Purposes.

I, Basappa Doddamani S/o Chanabasappa, # 22/3, 6th cross,1st Main, Deepanja - linagar, Mysore Road , B'luru 560026, have changed my name to Basappa Chanabasappa Dodamani for all purposes

I, SOMNATH K, Residing at A505, Svamitva Emrald Square Apartment, Bommasandra Jigani Link road, Guhring Company, Bangalore, Karnataka-560099, I here by declare that my Father correct name is BALU RAMAJI KADAM and the Mother correct name is SUSHILA BALU KADAM, vide affidavit dt: 06.01.2026, before notary V. Rangaraju, B.lore.

I, Santhosh Rishab Chand, R/a No.9, 2nd Cross Road, SU-RAJ RRMR Extension, B'lore –560027. Have Changed To Santosh Dilipkumar, Vide Afft Dtd.09.01.2026 sworn before Notary: Devaraja E.

I, Kamlesh P S/O, Prakash N R/o No B 504 Gr Rengent Park Off Bg Road Lake Road Gottigere Bengaluru 560083 have changed my name to Kamlesh Nichani for all purposes.

I, Poornima W/o Rajesh Kestur Narayanaswamy, # 1448, 8th C Cro1st I Main, Girinagar 2nd Phase, Bengaluru 560085 have changed my name to Kanakapura Srinivasaiah Poornima for all purposes

I, Uma Subrahmanyeswari Penmethsa residing at Villa 256, Prestige Lakeside Habitat, Varthur-Gunjur Main Road, Varthur, Bengaluru – 560087. I have changed my name to Uma Subrahmanyeswari Epuri. Vide affidavit dated 09/01/2026 sworn before notary. B Seshagiri Bengaluru

I Roopa W/O, Avinash Shankar R/o No 1005 10th Main Hrbr Layout 1st Block Navami Kitchen Kalyan Nagar Banaswadi Bengaluru-560043 have changed my name to Roopa Avinash

I, Damodar Reddy Dadum s/o Sankara Reddy Dadam, R/o Surya Residency, Flat No F-2, Vijaya, Sree Lyt 1st CRS Kodichikanahall B'lore-560076 have changed my name to Damodar Reddy Dadam for all purposes.

I, SHIFKATULLA MOHAMMED ISMAIL residing at # Bapunagara, Hesagal, Chickmagaluru – 577132. I have changed my name to SHIFKATULLA. Vide affidavit dated 09/01/2026 sworn before notary. Leela Bangalore

I, Sana Arif Khan w/o. Fayaz Baig Jaffer R/o. 61/1, 1st Floor, 2nd Main 17th A Cross, Ganesh Temple Lakkasandra, Bangalore have changed my name from Sana Arif Khan to Sana Fayaz Baig for all purposes by an affidavit sworn before Public Notary dated 08-01-2026

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HEALTH TIP: Including at least 2–3 prebiotic foods in your meals each day can make a big difference over time

Onions are a powerhouse of prebiotics and contain fibres, which act like fuel for the good bacteria in your intestines

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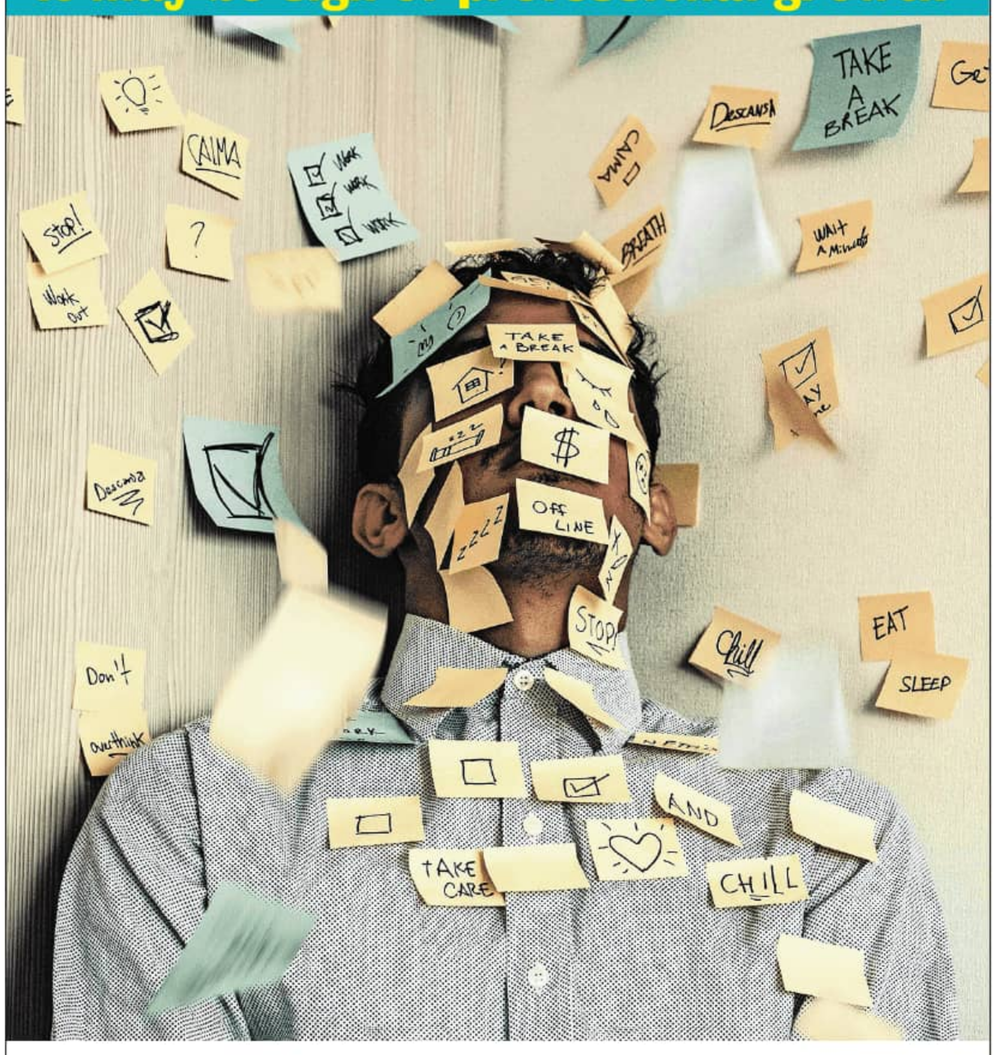
FEELING STUCK AT WORK?

It may be sign of professional growth



As the new year starts, it's natural to feel torn between gratitude and restlessness. December often disrupts routines: fewer meetings, quieter inboxes and a rare chance to take stock and reflect.

During this time, people may feel pride in how far they have come, alongside a growing sense that the path they are on no longer fits.

This discomfort is especially common at stages of life when professionals expect to feel more settled, yet instead feel stagnant. It's easy to dismiss such feelings as impatience or a lack of commitment.

But research on adult learning and development suggests that feeling stuck is often a signal of growth. It's evidence that our internal development has outpaced our external circumstances.

In educational research, this tension is often described as a disorienting dilemma: an experience that unsettles our assumptions and highlights a mismatch between how we see ourselves and the contexts we are in.

While these moments are often uncomfortable, they act as necessary catalysts for meaningful learning and change, motivating people to reassess their goals, values and direction. Seen this way, yearning for new beginnings is a rational response to growth.

Diagnosing the source of restlessness

If you're ready for change but unsure of where to begin, a useful first step is clarifying what is driving the sense of restlessness. Is it the work itself, the people you work with or the broader organisational culture?

When organisations are generally supportive, growth doesn't necessarily require leaving. Change may be possible within the same environment. In these cases, conversations with supervisors can reveal opportunities that are not immediately obvious, such as stretch assignments, special projects or support for further learning.

Research shows that people who stay with organisations over the long term often do so because of strong relationships, a good fit with their broader lives and what scholars call "job embeddedness" — the financial, social and psychological benefits of the position that make leaving costly.

But when the cost of staying is stifling your growth, it's worth exploring how you might either renegotiate growth where you are or thoughtfully prepare to move on.

Re-evaluating what matters now

Whether you're considering a shift within your organisation or beyond it, taking time to reassess your needs, goals and values is essential. What mattered to you earlier in your career may not matter in the same way now. Income, learning, flexibility, stability and meaning all rise and fall in importance across life stages.

Clarifying your values does not mean choosing one priority forever. It simply provides a clearer map for evaluating opportunities.

Some people prioritise mentorship or employer-supported education. Others need predictable schedules, strong health benefits or flexibility to care for family members.

Understanding what matters most now helps narrow your options and reduces the paralysis that often accompanies big decisions.

Focusing on activities rather than titles

Another way to gain clarity is to imagine your ideal role without fixating on job titles.

Titles can be misleading and often mask the day-to-day reality of the work. Instead, focus on activities. How will you spend most of your time? What skills will you be using day to day?

One useful question is what activities you would gladly do without being paid. These often point to core strengths and motivations worth taking seriously. Organisational psychologists describe this as intrinsic motivation — the internal drive to engage in an activity because it is inherently satisfying.

For example, early in my career, I began to notice a pattern in my volunteer work. I was consistently drawn to supporting professionals through moments of career transition, conflict and change. Over time, that realisation helped me recognise that mentoring and coaching were activities I already valued enough to do for free.

With that insight, I began targeting roles in my own career that rewarded those same activities, ensuring that my work consistently included elements that felt both meaningful and energising.

Preparing for the next step

Once priorities and interests are clearer, look closely at the qualifications and experiences the roles you are drawn to actually require and begin developing them intentionally.

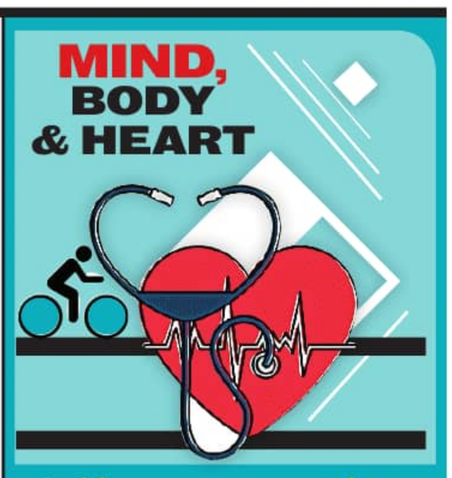
This can occur through low-risk avenues, including projects in your current job, entrepreneurial or side work, volunteer roles or targeted learning opportunities.

Consistently taking small, purposeful steps can help you systematically bridge the gap between your current capabilities and the demands of your next chapter. By actively cultivating these skills, you transform a period of restlessness into a constructive phase of professional readiness.

As you consider what comes next, use your network strategically to learn and ask questions. New beginnings unfold through conversations, experiments and choices made over time.

Also pay attention to the beliefs shaping your actions. Assumptions about what you can or cannot do can limit options more than skills ever do. Feeling stuck is an invitation to evolve and may mark the start of an exciting new chapter you can begin writing today.

(By Leda Stawnychko, Mount Royal University, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Healthy eating

Snack well

At home: Apart from fruits, roasted namkeen and roasted whole grains, like wheat, pulses and grams, papad, puffed rice, cucumber crudités, popcorn and yoghurt with fruit are great for curbing sudden hunger pangs.
Outside: Avoid burgers, French fries, pizzas, and even the neighbourhood chaat stall. Idlis, pasta (without cheese and with plenty of veggies), steamed corn, steamed momos, stuffed chilas, fruit chaat, bhel puri and salads (minus the mayo) are good choices.

Eat fruits

The rule: Pig out on the fruit aisle. When on the go, carry a box of cut fruits as they're quite refreshing, hydrating and healthy as snacks.
How to stick to it
Eat all the juicy fruits you can find— watermelon, musk melon, berries and lychees. Have only 8 to 10 lychees at a time, as the sugar content in this fruit is high. However, lychees are full of great essential minerals, antioxidants and vitamins. Another good choice is papaya.

Good breakfast

The rule: Have a good, filling breakfast, especially if you have a full day of shopping ahead.
"A meal rich in carbs and proteins will curb the urge to snack and keep you energised," says Jyoti Arora, team leader, nutrition and dietetics at Artemis Health Institute, Gurgaon.
How to stick to it
Oats, a boiled egg (only the egg white) with wholewheat toast, stuffed rotis, a vegetable sandwich, poha, upma or multigrain cereal with fruit and milk can keep you going for hours.
Pack a light lunch, like a wholewheat bread sandwich, or roti veggie rolls, along with some cut fruits to keep snacking at bay. —Femina

MIRRORLIGHTS

Some dogs can expand their vocabulary by eavesdropping on their owners

Dogs are great at learning action commands like "sit" and "stay." They're less good at remembering the names of things, like what their squeaky or stuffed toys are called.

Only an elite group of gifted word-learner dogs can retain the names of hundreds of toys. Scientists know of about 50 such pooches, but they aren't yet sure what's behind their wordy skills.

Now, new research is pushing the limits of what the dogs can do.

Scientists already knew that these extraordinary pups could learn the names of their stuffed pizza and doughnut toys from playtime with their owners. In the latest study, they discovered that the pups can also understand new names by eavesdropping.

Ten gifted dogs — including a Border collie named Basket and a Labrador named Augie — watched their owners hold a new toy and talk to another person about it. Then the pups were told to go to another room and retrieve that specific toy from a pile of many others.

Seven out of the 10 dogs successfully learned the names of their new toy stingrays and armadillos from passively listening to their owners.

"This is the first time that we see a specific group of dogs that are able to learn labels from overhearing interactions," said study author Shany Dror with Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary and the University of Veterinary Medicine in Austria.

The pups even succeeded when the owners put the toy in an opaque box and then spoke to another person about it, creating a disconnect between seeing the object and hearing its name.

Only a few other animals, like parrots and apes, have demonstrated a knack for this kind of eavesdropping. It's also essential to human development: Children under age 2 can pick up new words from listening, including ones their parents may not have intended.

However, these special dogs are fully grown, so the brain mechanisms enabling them to eavesdrop are likely different from those of humans, Dror said. —AP

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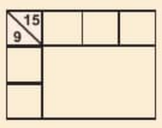
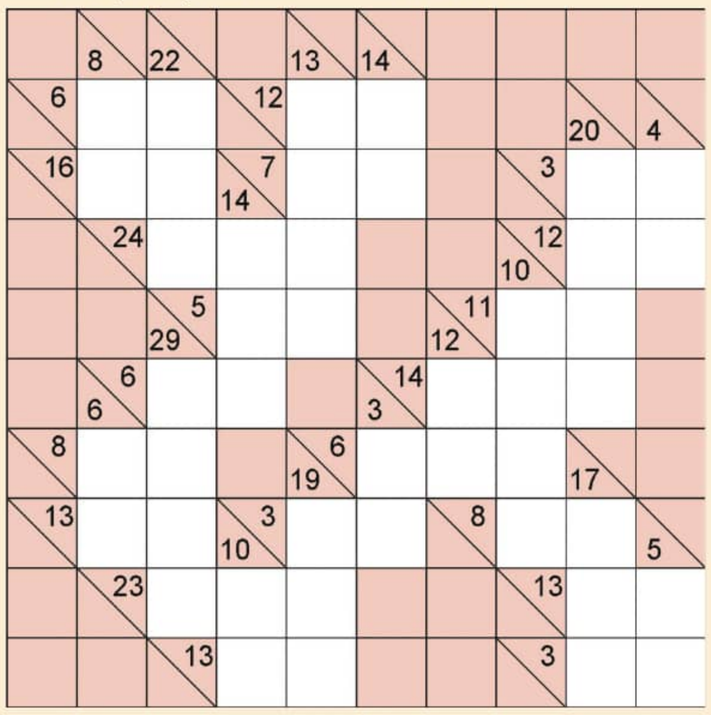
Kakuro

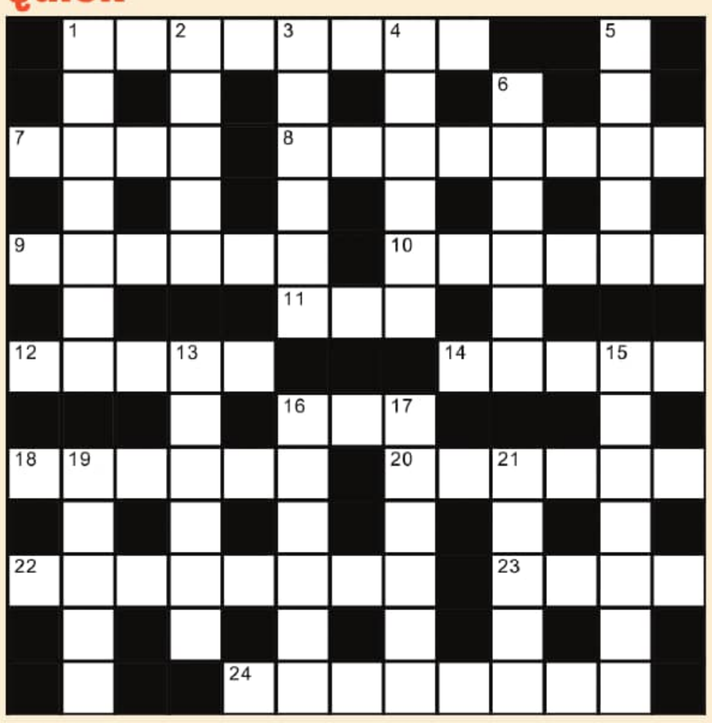
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 King or queen's daughter (8)
7 Nitrogenous fertilizer (4)
8 Uses needle and thread? (8)
9 Bury (6)
10 Acted poorly (6)
11 Responses abbreviation (3)
12 Flavouring agent (5)
14 Split second (5)
16 Short for 'manuscripts' (3)
18 Edict (6)
20 Cuisine which is a fusion of Kodava and Mangalorean (6)
22 Depending on or varying with climatic changes (8)
23 Skin affliction (4)
24 Spears having three prongs (8)

DOWN

1 Edible root (7)
2 Life stage of insect (5)
3 Winter melon (6)
4 Strikes or hits; chastises? (6)
5 Military blockade (5)
6 Marine creatures (6)
13 Cherry-coloured (6)
15 Parades ostentatiously (7)
16 Nastier; coarser or ruder (6)
17 Looked happy (6)
19 Build straight! (5)
21 Absorb knowledge (5)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: Y EQUALS S

PSYY LMK JSYYIYYBSM, KILQO LMK PBXI LCI SMI, QOICI XLPPY MS YOLKSU UOICI QOICI YOBMIY MS YTM.

Linemaro

If i had a star for every time you brightened my day, i would be holding a galaxy

Mindchow

You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough

Joke of the day

Why couldn't the leopard play hide and seek?
Because he was always spotted

Loop

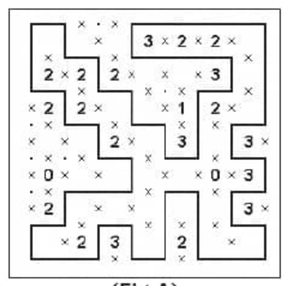
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

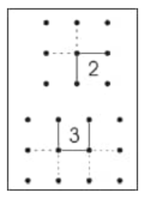
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

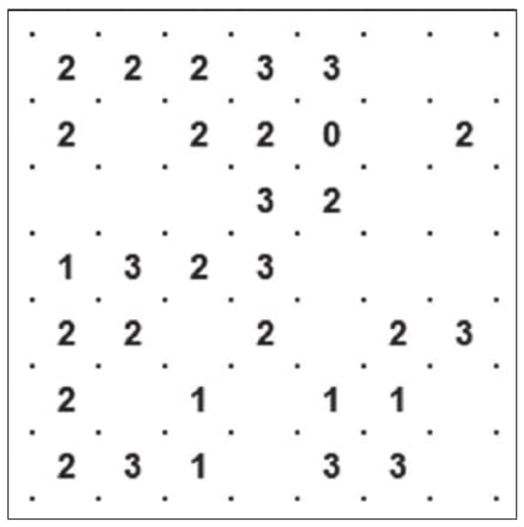
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



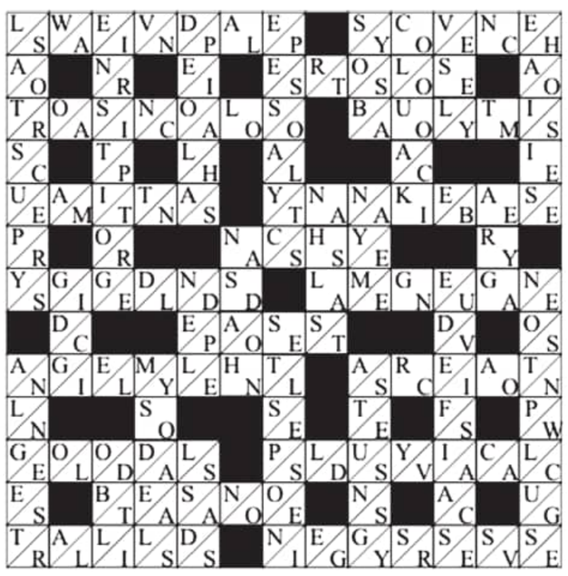
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



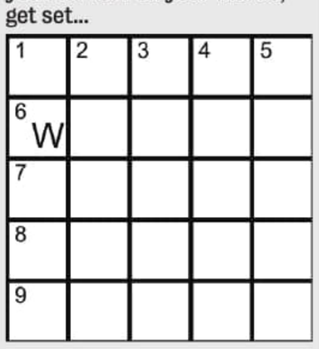
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

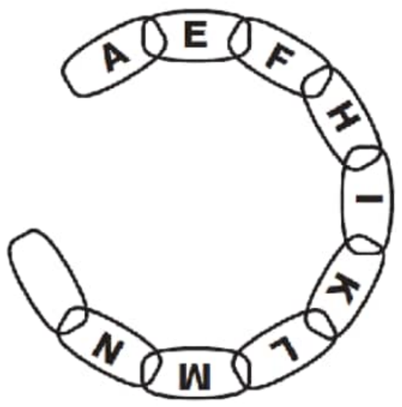
1 Corse; 6 Wrier; 7 Arab a; 8 Miens; 9 Peg go

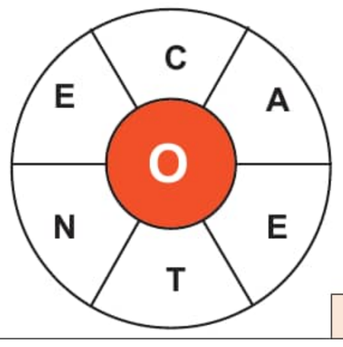
DOWN

1 Was MP; 2 Coir I; 3 Organ; 4 Grebe; 5 Saree

Mensapuzzle

Which letter goes in the final link to complete the chain?





Bull's eye

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

09 Average; 10 Good; 12 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

7				8				5
		2				3		
1		3	2		9	6		8
	4		9		2		6	
			8		5			
	3		1		4		9	
5		8	7		6	4		3
		7				2		
3				1				9

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 1

4 5 5 5

Medium = 6

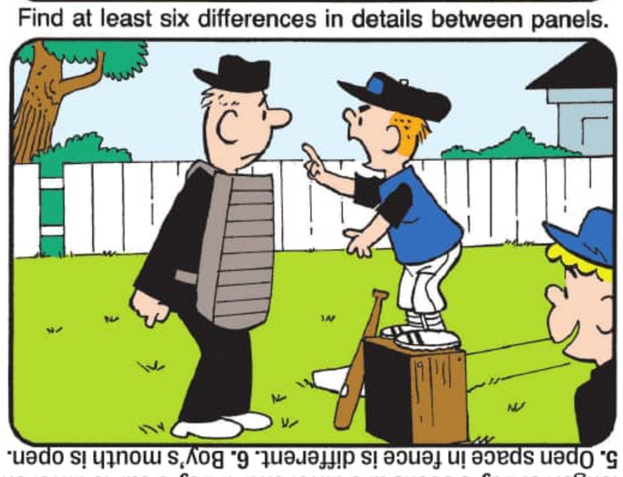
7 6 4 1

Hard = 11

4 4 5 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



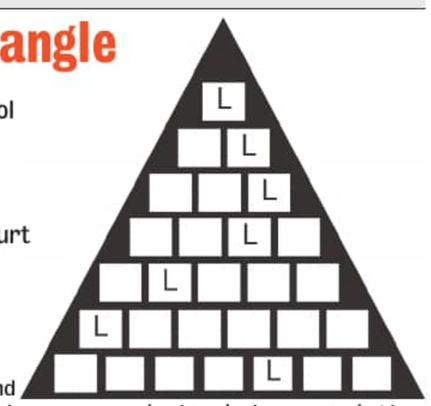
Differences: 1. Umpire's arm is longer. 2. Boy's cap is longer. 3. Boy's socks are different. 4. Boy's ear is different. 5. Open space in fence is different. 6. Boy's mouth is open.

Riddler

A number of people have broken the sound barrier, either in a super-fast car, or in nice fancy planes. However, hundreds of years ago it was broken on horseback. How?

Alpha triangle

1 Litre
2 Aluminium symbol
3 Heat unit, abbr.
4 Bath powder
5 Shoe grip
6 Find
7 King Arthur's court

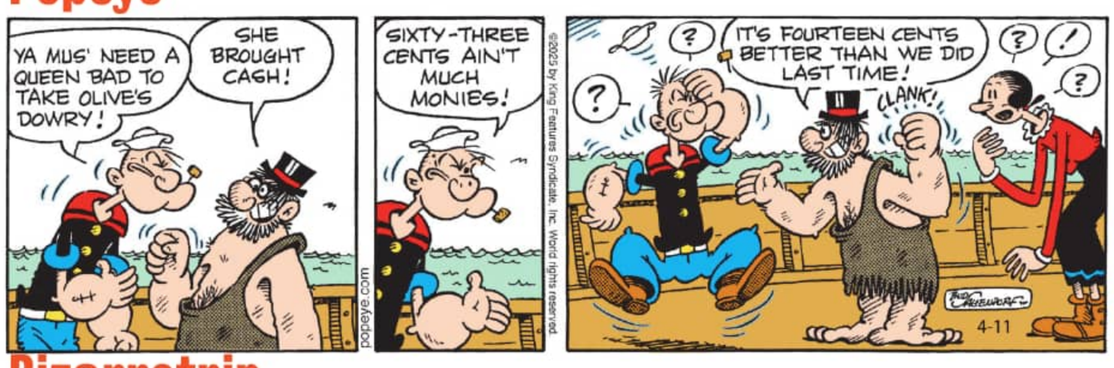


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye


YA MUS' NEED A QUEEN BAD TO TAKE OLIVE'S DOWRY!
SHE BROUGHT CASH!
SIXTY-THREE CENTS AIN'T MUCH MONIES!
IT'S FOURTEEN CENTS BETTER THAN WE DID LAST TIME!
CLANK!
4-11
popeye.com

Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

WE'RE GONNA MOVE THE CLOTHES FROM THE WASH TO THE DRYER AND PULL OUT THE STUFF THAT NEEDS TO BE AIR-DRIED.
AIR-DRIED? WE'VE NEVER DONE THAT BEFORE!
I'M TRYING TO INSTILL GOOD HABITS IN THE BOTH OF US!
THANKS FOR THINKING OF ME.
HEART OF THE CITY © 2025 ANDREWS MCMEEL
GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

YOUR COMIC STRIP IS CALLED 'THE WRINKLES,' BUT GRANDPA WRINKLE ISN'T IN THE STRIP EVERY DAY!
IS HE SUPPOSED TO BE?
ABSOLUTELY... EVERY SINGLE DAY!
THAT'S THE LAW!
BATIUK & DAVIS

Mutts

I SHOULD WRITE A BOOK ABOUT SHTAYING IN A RELATIONSHIP.
SHNELLY'S A HOUSECAT! THE TWO OF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN IN THE SAME ROOM!
CHAPTER ONE.
mutts.com

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

This is the year to solidify your most cherished professional and personal goals. Practical steps taken now will establish your legacy for years to come. Authority figures recognise your competence and offer strong support. Define your boundaries and work with purpose; this focused effort leads to a major, satisfying milestone achievement.

Aries Mar 21–Apr 20
Your efforts supporting others will yield positive outcomes today. Instead of new plans, focus on refining and completing tasks already started now. Success lies in finishing ongoing projects effectively.

Taurus Apr 21–May 20
A lack of resources ends today as what you need arrives unexpectedly. Embrace these gifts, but be strategic and plan wisely now. Utilise resources to their fullest to avoid future shortages successfully.

Gemini May 21–Jun 21
Listen to your inner voice for valuable insights, especially about relationships and love. Success has attracted distractors; stand firm and stay focused on professional goals. Do not let negative attention deter you.

Cancer Jun 22–July 23
Focusing on positives will completely shift your mood and outcomes today. Release what feels out of your control for peace. Luck favours your influence with authority. Use this power wisely to share your ideas.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Shift your caring nature inward; give yourself the attention you truly deserve today. You will excel as a host, creating a delightfully warm atmosphere socially. Prioritise your own well-being over others' needs now.

Virgo Aug 24–Sep 23
Accepting a few shortcomings is part of your necessary growth process today. Reconnect with parents or family and ensure they feel included in decisions. Your attention is needed at home now.

Libra Sep 24–Oct 22
Discipline guides your day; organise your workspace for optimal productivity and clarity. A structured plan keeps you on track. Indulge in well-deserved evening pleasures, balancing it with physical activity.

Scorpio Oct 23–Nov 22
Prioritise building your immunity with exercise, diet, and proper rest now. Luck favours you, aligning desires and opportunities effortlessly. Make progress without needing to overextend yourself significantly.

Sagittarius Nov 23–Dec 22
Your adventurous spirit is strong, but caution is logically advised over travel today. Redirect that energy into important work; leadership opportunities are near. Focused effort now sets you up for future success.

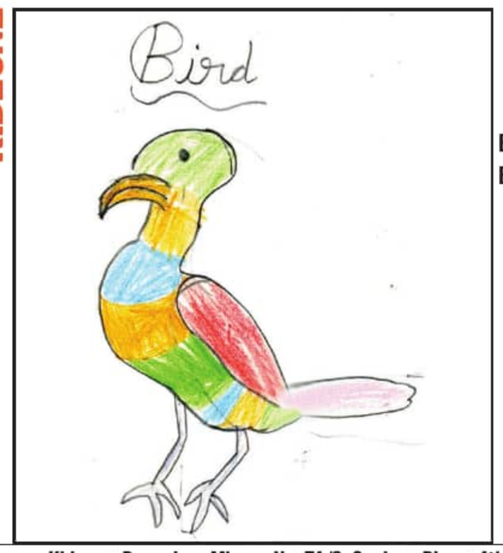
Capricorn Dec 23–Jan 20
Don't dismiss romantic interest quickly; companionship offers balance and warmth in life. Overwhelming work slows today, giving you time to recharge fully. Prioritise health with mindful activity and rest.

Aquarius Jan 21–Feb 19
Find comfort and calmness in spiritual or soothing music today for soul healing. Use this balanced energy to joyfully reconnect with friends you lost touch with. Rebuilding social ties brings happiness.

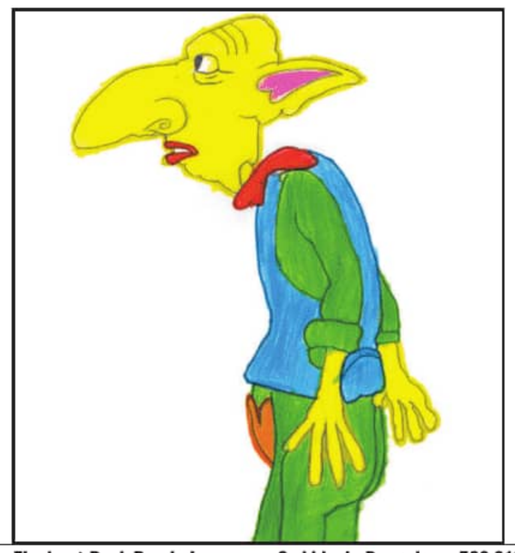
Pisces Feb 20–Mar 20
Today is excellent for openly expressing what you have been holding back with warmth. Communicate your innovative ideas directly to superiors at work. Clear communication ensures your valuable contributions are fully noticed.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Bhuvan, Bengaluru



Rahul, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M (2^28 / 2^8)^(1/2)
(2^20)^(1/2)
2^10 = 1024

RIDDLER Many people who ride horses carry whips. They crack the whip while they ride the horse. When a whip is cracked, the tip travels faster than the speed of sound, which makes the loud snap. It actually creates a miniature sonic boom of sorts. The whip breaks the sound barrier, thus, it was broken on horseback.

BULL'S EYE
ACETONE, aeon, atone, canoe, coat, cone, note, ocean, octane, once, taco, tone

FAST FIVE

S	C	O	R	E
W	I	R	E	R
A	R	A	B	A
M	I	N	E	S
P	O	G	G	E

STRIKE OUT

S	W	I	N	D	L	E	■	S	C	E	N	E	■	■
O	■	N	■	E	■	S	T	O	L	E	■	A	■	■
R	A	S	C	A	L	S	■	B	O	L	T	S	■	■
C	■	P	■	L	■	A	■	■	C	■	■	E	■	■
E	M	I	T	S	■	Y	A	N	K	E	E	S	■	■
R	■	R	■	A	S	H	Y	■	■	R	■	■	■	■
Y	I	E	L	D	S	■	A	E	G	E	A	N	■	■
■	■	D	■	■	E	A	S	T	■	■	D	■	O	■
A	I	L	M	E	N	T	■	S	C	I	O	N	■	■
N	■	■	O	■	■	E	■	T	■	F	■	P	■	■
G	O	O	D	S	■	P	L	U	V	I	A	L	■	■
E	■	B	E	A	N	O	■	N	■	C	■	U	■	■
R	A	I	L	S	■	N	E	G	R	E	S	S	■	■

QUICK

■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T	R	I	D	E	N	T	S
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	T
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	■	■	■	C
S	E	A	S	O	N	■	N	A	■	L	■	A	C	N	E
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	I	■	A	■	I	■	■	U
D	E	C	O	R	E	■	E	M	A	L	N	A	■	D
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	L
S	P	I	C	E	■	■	■	M	S	S	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
E	N	T	O	M	B	■	E	M	O	T	E	D	■	■
S	■	■	■	G	■	A	■	■	■	T	■	G	■	■
U	R	E	A	■	S	T	I	T	C	H	E	S	■	■
A	■	M	■	A	■	M	■	O	■	■	I	■	■	■
P	R	I	N	C	E	S	S	■	■	■	S	■	■	■

MENSA PUZZLE
T. Letters are arranged in alphabetical order, skipping any letters written with curved lines.

QUOTE UNCODE
Loss and possession, death and life are one. There falls no shadow where there shines no sun.

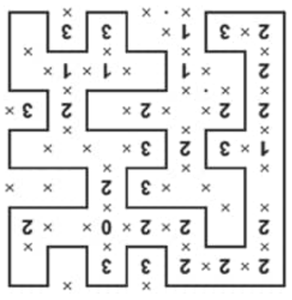
SUDOKU

7	6	4	3	8	1	9	2	5
9	8	2	6	5	7	3	4	1
1	5	3	2	4	9	6	7	8
8	4	1	9	3	2	5	6	7
2	7	9	8	6	5	1	3	4
6	3	5	1	7	4	8	9	2
5	9	8	7	2	6	4	1	3
4	1	7	5	9	3	2	8	6
3	2	6	4	1	8	7	5	9

ALPHA TRIANGLE
L, Al, Cal, Talc, Cleat, Locate, Camelot.

GO FIGURE
Easy
5 + 5 − 5 − 4 = 1
Medium
4 − 6 + 7 + 1 = 6
Hard
5 x 4 − 5 − 4 = 11

LOOP



KAKURO

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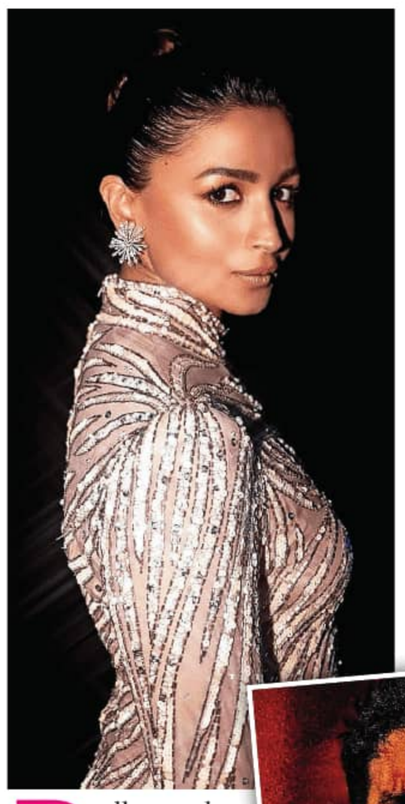
Poster buzz

Alia gushes over Shahid's gangster avatar



Bollywood fans are buzzing as the makers unveiled Shahid Kapoor's gripping first-look poster from 'O'Romeo', directed by Vishal Bhardwaj on Friday. Sporting a blood-soaked, fully tattooed gangster avatar as Romeo, Shahid's intense transformation hints at a dark, edgy action-romance set in post-independence Mumbai. Alia Alia Bhatt praised the poster and commented on the post, "Can't wait for this film!!!!". Presented by the visionary Sajid Nadiadwala and directed by the acclaimed Vishal Bhardwaj, O'Romeo also stars Tripti Dimri. Kapoor's intense first look hints at a character that is both menacing and quirky, promising a unique cinematic experience full of depth, drama, and passion.

The film is all set to release during Valentine's Week on February 13, 2026.

Shahid Kapoor's O'Romeo tattoo transformation According to Pinkvilla, Shahid Kapoor will be seen sporting a full body tattoo for the visionary filmmaker's movie.

This radical transformation is said to be central to his character's identity and psychological depth, marking a first-of-its-kind look not only for the actor but also possibly for the Indian cinema as a whole. The physical transformation demanded intense preparation, with the creative team paying meticulous attention to the tattoo's design, placement, and narrative relevance. The look is reportedly not cosmetic but deeply embedded into the story, reflecting the character's inner turmoil, rage, and emotional scars.

Apart from 'O Romeo', Shahid Kapoor will also be seen sharing the screen with Kriti Sanon and Rashmika Mandanna in the much-awaited 'Cocktail 2'.

On the work front, Alia will be next seen in the action thriller 'Alpha' alongside Sharvari and Bobby Deol. She also has Sanjay Leela Bhansali's much-awaited film 'Love & War' where she will share the screen with Ranbir Kapoor and Vicky Kaushal.

—ETimes

Still an outsider

Elnaaz Norouzi said in a recent interview that she is still an outsider and things are not easy for her. She shared that finding space in the industry takes time and effort.

In an interview with News 18, Elnaaz said, "I'm still an outsider. It was difficult to find my space, and I'm still carving it out. It's not easy, but I'm loving it. It's a challenge, and I love challenges, so it's okay."

She accepts the struggle and chooses to grow through it. She believes the grind teaches her something every day.

When asked if she loses roles to star kids or popular names, Elnaaz did not hesitate at all. She answered in a very simple way. Elnaaz said, "Yeah. All the time."

The 'Sacred Games' star explained that many films are made with certain actors already in mind. "Of course, some projects are built from the ground up for actors who already have a certain stature in the industry. That's very obvious and out there."

Elnaaz said she understands how the system works and does not get shocked by it anymore. For her, knowing the truth helps her stay calm and focused.

— ETimes

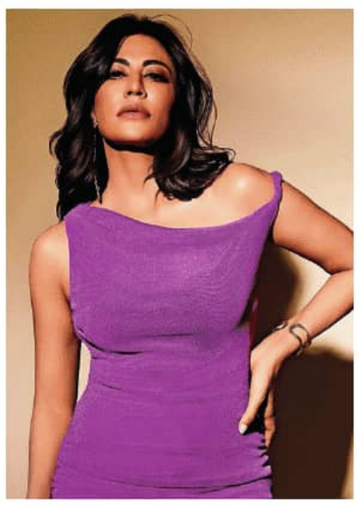
Mob frenzy: 'John's back was full of scratch marks'

Chitrangda Singh has spoken about mobbing incidents at public events which several actors had faced recently. Singh said the issue is very serious and should not be taken lightly. Reacting to recent videos of Nidhhi Agerwal and Samantha Ruth Prabhu getting mobbed, she said such situations can quickly go out of control.

In an interview with Hindustan Times, she said, "Some of these events can really get out of hand because you have to be able to control the crowd."

Chitrangda shared a shocking story from a college promotion in Delhi for the film 'I, Me Aur Main'.

She recalled, "John Abraham and I went and promoted this film we did a long time back... The crowd started to build up and suddenly I see everybody's trying to whisk off John and he kind of looked back at me to take me along. As soon as we sat in the car, John took off his shirt and his whole back was full of scratch marks."



—ETimes

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